

TOWN OF PEACHAM
Wednesday, April 3, 2024
Selectboard Meeting
Hybrid meeting in the Peacham Library Community Room and via Zoom

Attendance

In-person: Alfred Dedam, Selectboard, William Kempton, Selectboard, Andrea Kane, Selectboard, Jeremy Withers, Road Foreman, Rusty Barber, Katherine Siner

Via Zoom: Molly Willard, Selectboard, John Reiss, Jake Thomas, Janie Carle, Mark Elliot, Karen Lewis, Barbara Noyes Pulling, Bob Harnish, Halie Tillotson, Robert Bartell

Minutes

1. Call to order by Alfred at 6:30pm, Wednesday, April 3, 2024
2. Additions to the agenda – none, tabling the Cemetery Sexton discussion until Peter can be present.
3. Highway Department Update
 - a. Cleaning up the roads
 - b. All trucks are good at the moment
 - c. Trying to schedule a meeting with VTrans to discuss brook on Slack St that's changing path and has been crowding road since last summer.
 - d. Monday – Eclipse day- crew will keep to same schedule. Andrea asked about putting up signs on Mack's Mountain for local traffic only, but we don't have any such signage.
 - e. Jeremy will be away over the weekend.
 - f. Alfred requested a drive around with Jeremy to inspect the conditions of the asphalt roads so he has a better idea of how to plan for maintenance moving forward. Jeremy agreed.
4. Town Clerk/Treasurer Update
 - a. Digitizing records contract needs to be signed.
 - b. Larry Jensen requested addressing the leak in water line by soccer field. The soccer field will be a topic of discussion soon, so Alfred would like to address it then.
 - c. Division of quarterly stipend for Cemetery Sexton. Needs the date ranges so she can make that payment.
 - d. Published RFB for Town Hall. We paid a few places for the short posting. Payment coming out of ARPA money, so needs to be signed.
5. VT Declaration of Inclusion – Barbara Noyes Pulling and Bob Harnish
 - a. Declaration originated in Franklin, VT. Meant to coach town with helping with tolerance and inclusion. Was adopted by other towns, so group was created to introduce town by town throughout the State. So far 142 towns and cities (75% of State population) have adopted, endorsed, and implemented in their towns using guidelines group provides. Read the declaration for meeting. Economic benefits and a strong tool for economic development role. Governor has indicated there is a shortage of labor, group feels this statement could address that by making the state more welcoming and would show that the state is taking inclusion seriously. Noted study that shows direct connection between growth and diversity. Power in standing individually and together as a state. Molly asked about the process for adopting. It would be signed by Selectboard then added to list and map. Alfred explained that he's not entirely comfortable with it because he doesn't want to adopt it without material changes. Molly commented that the intention is a platform for town governance to aspire to, regardless of the

individual behaviors of residents. Barbara advised that it could be adopted as is, or with other conditions. She suggested a committee to supply recommendations and/or grants that are available. Molly commented that with this adoption, the town can reference this as a commitment. Bob commented that it could just be a symbolic statement, but it could also be used for practical purposes. A group member is available to support these efforts. Janie Carle commented that she didn't feel it was necessary because Peacham is already a very inclusive community. She is concerned about unintended consequences. Karen Lewis asked about specific grants. Ideal Program has grants for up to \$10,000. VLCT has a program to support communities as well. Rusty Barber commented that when Town puts something out to bid, there is a section with language addressing this. Molly commented that this is a standard clause. Alfred commented on the barrier to entry includes truly affordable housing, and he doesn't think the community would support the change in zoning laws necessary to remove that barrier. Leveraging property is also a challenge in Peacham. He doesn't think that adopting the declaration will make a significant impact to this situation. As a Native American, he used the example of Indigenous People's day as an example of an empty lip service that makes some feel good, but doesn't make any true impact. His biggest concern to socioeconomic diversity. He'd like to hear more in-depth discussion. Molly proposed giving the board time to read into it, and discuss it further next meeting. Karen Lewis commented that the church has formally adopted a declaration of inclusion just recently, and invited the Selectboard to come to the celebration service on June 30th.

- b. **William moved to table the discussion until next meeting, seconded by Molly, all in favor, so moved.**

6. PCH update – Jake Thomas

- a. Regarding the easement for driveway leading up to the tennis courts, the Chase and Chase subdivision survey exists. Jake spoke with attorney to clarify the process. It would need to be added to the survey and described. Not sure if it's added to the deed or a separate deed. PCH has formally motioned to approve of the idea of the easement. Legal language necessary in deeds and survey is supported by PCH. Town needs a new lawyer as Annette Lorraine is not available. Alfred will work on that.

7. Rusty Barber – renovation exterior waterproofing

- a. Request to approve up to \$500 to fund a building assessment by resource recommended by NVDA, which would then provide us with information to help us get more funding for the project from the NVDA. It can also provide more confidence in what the renovation project is doing.

- i. **Andrea moved to approve up to \$500 for a building assessment, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**

Discussion about using Shane Stevenson for the foundation waterproofing and the timing. He would charge \$10,850. Allen Thresher would charge \$13,008.

- ii. **Andrea moved to approve the amount to hire Shane Stevenson for waterproofing work, with the stipulation that the work be done by the end of August, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.**

8. 4th of July – Katherine Siner

- a. Committee looking for members.
- b. Balance is currently -\$1,042.46. Deficit because of 2020 fireworks. In 2023 committee raised \$2610 in donations. Each year spending \$800-\$900 dollars for events. She would like to send

out letters notifying of parade and would like to start booking vendors. She wants to clarify that she understands there is a deficit, but that trends are showing more support. More people are coming to it and it's an important event in the community. Low impact on the town, but looking for a few more volunteers. Once they come out of the deficit, she hopes to build back some other events. Alfred asked about donation methods, and whether it could include digital methods.

9. Mowing bids - Total

- a. Guilmette Landworks - \$25,530 – from Burlington – cost seems unrealistic, and perhaps they didn't familiarize themselves with the locations well enough. Precision Lawn Care - \$36,000 – from St. Johnsbury, JM Yard Services LLC – 32,500 – includes example insurance certificate, from Cabot, 5 Seasons Landworks – Unclear difference in bid pricing. One is \$56,080 and other is \$43,078. Not great success with them last year. Benefit to keeping it local, even if price is a little higher. Discussion about details of Precision Lawn Care and JM Yard Services bids.

- i. **Andrea moved to accept the bid from Precision Lawn Care, William seconded, all in favor, so moved.**

Next meeting the contract will be ready to sign.

10. Cemetery Sexton – tabled until Peter Craig is available

11. Public comment - none

12. Approve minutes

- a. **William moved to approve the minutes from March 20th, 2024 seconded by Andrea, all in favor, so moved.**

John Reiss asked that the minutes be amended to correct the spelling of his last name.

13. Review and approve bills

- a. **William moved to approve bills as presented, seconded by Molly, all in favor, so moved.**

14. Review correspondence

- a. Declaration of Inclusion information
- b. VLCT training information from Anna Carvalho

15. Andrea moves to adjourn at 07:54, seconded by William, all in favor, so moved.

Documents provided to the Selectboard and discussed at this meeting are available by request to the Town Office.